

Carle Building
151-153 Water Street; 134-136 Maiden Lane
New York
New York County
New York

HABS No. NY-4390

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

CARLE BUILDING

Address: 151-153 Water Street, 134-136 Maiden Lane, New York,
New York County, New York.

Demolished March 1960.

Brief Statement
of Significance: This building was not only a good example of the
Greek Revival commercial structures built in
New York City in the 1830's, but was remarkably
little altered throughout its life.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

- A. Original Owners: The Carle Building was built, probably in 1839, by Silas Carle and his nephew John Carle, Jr. Throughout its existence it was owned by the same family firm of druggists and paint dealers, known successively as Silas Carle & Nephew, Carle and Strong, John Carle and Sons, and John Carle and Sons, Inc., the half of the building at the corner (153 Water and 134-136 Maiden Lane) being used by the Carle firm, and 151 rented out.
- B. Date of Erection: No record of the building's date of erection has been found; a likely date seems 1839, since the firm's address first becomes 153 Water c. Maiden-Lane in Longworth's City Directory of 1839-40 (another address appears in the 1838-39 directory). In any case, it was built after September 7, 1835; a survey plan of that date in the possession of the present Carle (Robert W.) shows the land to have contained two two-story brick front houses, a three-story brick front house, brick sheds, and a yard.
- C. Architect, Builder: No record has been found.
- D. Original Plans: No record has been found.
- E. Notes on Alterations and Additions: At the rear of 151 Water Street a shed with skylight had been added recently. An early, but much-faded photographic print in Robert W. Carle's possession shows that some changes in the exterior openings had been made (between the time of the early photograph and 1960): iron shutters had been removed from the windows (second through fifth floors); four additional windows had been unbricked on the second floor of the Maiden Lane side of the building; and the system of openings on the ground floor had been altered, on Maiden Lane the first two bays (from east to west) contained windows at the time the early photograph was taken, and the third, fifth, sixth, and seventh were bricked in (or covered) and the fourth was a doorway.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The building was in two halves divided by a party wall: one half measured 58' on Maiden Lane and 21'-7" on Water Street; the other half measured 21'-2" on Water Street and was approximately three feet shorter than its companion.
2. Foundations: To the extent that these could be inspected, the foundations under the east wall of the building-half fronting on Maiden Lane were of rough stones laid horizontally; the foundations supporting the party wall (as seen from the other half of the building) were of ashlar.
3. Wall construction: The walls were of brick, two brick lengths thick, showing a running bond on the exterior and a common bond on the interior. On the interior, horizontal wood sleepers were spaced at intervals of 8-12 courses.
4. Stoops: There were two steps at the corner of the building (153 Water Street and 134 Maiden Lane), both of stone, and two more in front of 151 Water Street, the first stone and the second in the form of an iron grating providing light to a cellar window below. To the right of these last two steps there was a loading platform.
5. Chimneys: Two chimneys rose from the party wall.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: Of the exterior doorways, those at the corner (one on Maiden Lane and two on Water Street) were probably in their original positions. After demolition, part of a stone lintel appeared (attached to the building next to the east) which apparently had been part of a doorway leading from the corner building into a yard which had existed behind 151 Water Street before the construction of the shed with skylight.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Above the first floor a stone lintel and sill appeared at each window opening on the exterior; on the interior, a segmental, brick relieving arch was set above a wooden lintel at each of these window openings. Into the front of the surround of each window which was unbricked in the photograph in Mr. Carle's possession, a metal frame with hinges for shutters was set (at the time of the building's destruction). Wooden window frames with two six-light sashes each were set one brick length from the outside

surface of the wall. On the first floor, while the openings had been altered, the eight-light, two-sash windows were apparently original.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape: The roof of the southwestern half of the building was pitched from the front of the building up to the rear, leaving room for a set of three extra windows (quite possibly not original) at the back of the building. Rafters ran parallel to Water Street from party wall to party wall. The roof of the northeastern half of the building was pitched up from the two street fronts, with rafters running from the faces of the building to the party wall.
- b. Cornice: Brick dentils and a metal gutter formed a cornice.

B. Technical Description of Interiors:

1. Floor plans: Partitions at the time of inspection were not original.
2. Stairways: Wooden stairways occurred at the southwest end of the southeast wall of the corner building and along the southwest wall of 151 Water Street. A circular cast-iron staircase led from the fifth floor of the corner building to the roof.
3. Flooring: 1" thick wood on beams varying from approximately 4" x 12" spaced 1'-6" on center on the top floor, to 6" x 12" spaced 1' on center on the ground floor.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Mostly unfinished, but with some plastering, which was not original, and some embossed metal.
5. Doorways and doors: Round arches of brick had been built into the party wall, two on each of the first three floors and one on each of the top two. One of these, that on the fourth floor, had been unbricked to form a doorway (with modern metal door).
6. Elevators: There were rope-drawn freight elevators in the east corner of the fifth floor of the corner building and on the right front corner of the fourth floor of 151 Water Street.
7. Lighting: Electric.

8. Chimneys: Chimney flues ran within the party wall approximately 7' from the Water Street front of the building and 4' from the rear. While holes had been punctured on various floors for stove pipes, the only sign of a fireplace (or of a flue since there was no breast) was a segmental arch on the ground-floor party wall on a line with the front flue.

Prepared by Cervin Robinson, Photographer
New York
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